

capital punishment, and I still do. And I wouldn't necessarily make that a litmus test, because there's a big majority on the Supreme Court that support capital punishment. So whatever my appointee turns out to do on that, it won't change the majority. The majority agree with me on that issue.

But I think that being big-hearted is not the same thing as being soft-headed. I mean, we need an administration that takes an aggressive approach to the crime issue. But we need to be smarter about it. I mean, we can't talk tough on crime and make sentences tougher and refuse to pass the Brady bill and make people wait 7 days before criminals can buy handguns. We ought to take automatic weapons out of the hands of kids in the streets of our cities. If we're really going to be tough on crime, we ought to be not only tough in the traditional ways but also to change the environment some.

Academy Awards

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, it's my unfortunate duty now to ask the tough questions you don't want to hear. Number one, do you have a favorite in the Oscar race for the Academy Awards? Have you seen these movies? Which one do you favor?

The President. I haven't seen them all, so I can't say. The ones I have seen I enjoyed. I thought Clint Eastwood's western was very good, "The Unforgiven," and a remarkable departure from a lot of his past movies. I thought

Jack Nicholson was brilliant in "A Few Good Men." I try to see all the Oscar movies every year. I still haven't seen "Scent of a Woman." I'm working on that. I'm trying to have that brought into the White House. And when I see them all, then I'll have my favorite, but I don't think it's fair until I give them all a shot.

NCAA Basketball Championships

Mr. Rather. I know you don't follow basketball, but I'm willing to make you an offhand wager that North Carolina slaughters Arkansas.

The President. I bet they don't. I don't think they can slaughter them. We haven't lost too many games by a lot of points. Arkansas doesn't have any tall players. As you saw in the St. John's game where they played an incredibly talented, well-disciplined team, they often win by never quitting, a philosophy that I try to follow myself.

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, you're very generous. We appreciate your hospitality. Thank you very much.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 5:25 p.m. in the Library at the White House, and it was broadcast nationwide at 10 p.m. In his remarks, the President referred to Gen. Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Nomination for Posts at the Housing and Urban Development and Transportation Departments

March 24, 1993

The President intends to nominate his long-time adviser Rodney Slater as Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, San Francisco port executive Michael Huerta as Associate Deputy Secretary of Transportation for Intermodalism, and investment banker Aida Alvarez as Director of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight, the White House announced today.

In addition, the President announced his approval of the appointments by Transportation

Secretary Pena of Jane Garvey to be Deputy Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration; by Energy Secretary O'Leary of John Keliher to be Director of the Office of Intelligence and National Security; and by Health and Human Services Secretary Shalala of four officials: Wendell Primus, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation; Kimberly Parker, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Legislation (Congressional Liaison); Karen Pollitz, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Legislation (Health); and James O'Hara, Associate Commissioner for

Public Affairs, Food and Drug Administration. "Rodney Slater has been one of my most trusted advisers for many years and played a major role in getting me to this position," said the President. "Rodney, Michael Huerta, and Aida Alvarez are the kind of innovative leaders that we need in public service. I am very

pleased that they and the people chosen by Secretaries Pena, O'Leary, and Shalala are joining me here in Washington."

NOTE: Biographies were made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Remarks in a Telephone Conversation With Senators George Mitchell and Jim Sasser and an Exchange With Reporters March 25, 1993

Russia

Q. Does the situation now appear to have eased in Russia to you, Mr. President?

The Vice President. I don't think this is a press conference.

The President. I don't know. I hope so.

[At this point, the telephone conversation began.]

Senator Mitchell. Hello?

The President. Senator?

Senator Mitchell. Yes.

The President. How are you doing?

Senator Mitchell. We're doing fine. How are you doing?

The President. Well, I'm doing a lot better, thanks to you.

Senator Mitchell. No, thanks to Jim Sasser, who is sitting right here with me and on the line, too.

Senator Sasser. Hey, Mr. President, I'm on this party line, also.

The President. Hello, Senator Sasser.

Senator Sasser. How are you doing? We're doing terrific here.

The President. The Vice President's here with me, and we just wanted to thank you for the work you've done. This is a great, great day.

Senator Sasser. It certainly is. And we want to thank you, I do, particularly, for the help that you gave us in moving this resolution through the committee and off the floor. We had 56 amendments, and the truth is that not a single number changed in that budget resolution on any of those amendments. And we couldn't have done it without your help.

The President. Well, we were glad to do it. I believe, and I think the American people believe, that this is really an historic moment. Fi-

nally, we've done something to break the gridlock and to bring the deficit down and to create new jobs through investment. It's a remarkable achievement. And I know we've got a lot of work still to do, but the fact that the Senate and the House have both passed these budget resolutions, it's really astonishing this early. And I'm just amazed, because we all know what a hard road you had to hoe. I can't tell you how much I admire you and how grateful I am to both of you.

Senator Sasser. You're very kind to say that, and I very much appreciate it. I might say that this is the earliest time in my memory—the majority leader may know another time—but this is the earliest time in my memory that we passed a budget resolution here in the Senate. And we're proud of that and proud of your help on getting it done.

And tell the Vice President we sure appreciate him coming over here and giving us encouragement.

The Vice President. Well, I'm on the line, Jim, and thank you very much. You did a fantastic job. George, I think Jim is right. This is the earliest in history that a new budget has passed. And I've been hearing from a lot of people about how effective you all were in the caucus meeting in the conference a couple of days ago. The unity among Democratic Senators has been just remarkable and has made this whole thing possible. So, Mr. Leader, congratulations to you, and to you, Jim.

Senator Mitchell. Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President. We really do appreciate your help, not just your physical presence but the leadership you gave in talking to Democratic Senators. I know many of them were impressed